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Martin's Point Bridge Advisory Committee : Meeting Minutes, September 21, 2010

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**Martin's Point Bridge Advisory Committee
Martin's Point Health Care Center
Minutes of September 21, 2010 Meeting
6 to 8 pm**

Attendees:

Committee members

Hilary Bassett	Nathan Poore
Sue Ellen Bordwell	Julie MacDonald
Patrick Costin	Richard Weare
Cheri Juniewicz	Paul Niehoff
Kathi Earley	Dave Redlefsen
Suzanne Foley-Ferguson	Jay Reynolds
Mayer Fistal	Holly Winger
Adrian Fox	Ann Goggin
Mike Bobinsky	Peter Stuckey
Donald Hamilton	Bonny Rodden
Don Gower	Gene Gillies

Other attendees

Wayne Frankhauser, MaineDOT
Ben Condon, MaineDOT
Leanne Timberlake, MaineDOT
Sally Oldham, Consultant to MaineDOT
Dale Spaulding, The Louis Berger Group
Paul DeStefano, The Louis Berger Group
Jeff McEwen, Federal Highway Administration

Sally Oldham opened the meeting and thanked everyone for coming. She asked for any comments on the minutes from the August 17, 2010 meeting. There were no comments and the minutes were approved. She reviewed highlights of the guidelines for meetings adopted during the initial meeting in July.

The group reviewed the draft Problems and Needs statement that was prepared based on the 5 breakout groups' draft statements developed at the August meeting. Comments included the following:

- Could the statement include mention of accommodating a natural gas line? Leanne indicated various utility questions will be considered as the RFP is drafted. While some issues may not rise to the level to be included in the Problems and Needs statement, Sally indicated they can be discussed during future meetings when the group considers related issues.
- Sally explained that MaineDOT is currently reviewing a document that describes the public involvement effort prior to issuing the RFP and this plan gives a general sense of the sequence of topics that the committee will discuss to provide input to the RFP.
- Bridge RFP should address possible sea level changes due to climate change effects.

- Consider adding to Problems and Needs statement that the bridge project should address recreational needs beyond what already was included, specifically boating interests such as a carry in boat launch or access to the river. Following some discussion, Sally suggested the concept could be phrased as follows: “maximize potential access to the river for recreational activities.” This would not be a problem, however, but a need or an element of the Vision.
- The old bridge abutment’s configuration limits access to the water. Can this be corrected when the new bridge is constructed?
- Word modifications were made to clarify the conflicts of movements on the sidewalk and to describe the need for a means for pedestrians to cross the street.
- Considerable discussion ensued regarding the last two sentences addressing needs in terms of how best to phrase these so that the need to create a 100-year bridge design with specific qualities is not preeminent but is balanced with other needs implied in the paragraph describing problems.
- Jeff McEwen of FHWA suggested that we keep this as a statement of problems and needs, with the needs listed in a separate paragraph and additional needs articulated to indicate the importance of addressing needs beyond those indicated in the two sentences already drafted.
- Discussion about the need to serve all users led to adding “multi-use” before “bridge designed to last 100 years.”
- A question was asked about the use of composites as a construction material for the bridge. Wayne indicated MaineDOT is researching the use of composites. They are not using composites on major bridges now but would not likely rule out their use.

As it seemed some concepts raised fit better into the Vision than the Problems and Needs and the relation of problems to needs needed further consideration, Sally suggested that she would ask a small group of volunteers to refine the draft Problems and Needs statement for the next meeting and asked if everyone was comfortable with moving on to develop draft Vision statements. The group agreed to this approach.

Following is the composite Problems and Needs statement as redrafted through the group discussion:

The Martin’s Point Bridge is a major artery between Portland and Falmouth and points north, as well as a pedestrian and cycling corridor and fishing destination. The bridge needs replacement due to its deteriorating condition. The bridge is too vehicle oriented and doesn’t serve the needs of all users. On the Portland side sight lines make it difficult to see oncoming traffic and to assess safety conditions. Traffic moves faster than the speed limit compromising safety. The sidewalk is too narrow to serve the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and fishermen, and there are no means for pedestrians needing to cross the street. The bridge feels more like a generic extension of a highway than a gateway between the town of Falmouth and East Deering in Portland and does not take full advantage of the beauty of the environment or the historic elements of the area such as Martin’s Point.

Needs include creating a good quality, durable, well-constructed, low maintenance, multi-use bridge designed to last 100 years. Needs also include maintaining two lanes of traffic during construction.

Sally called on Sue Foley-Ferguson, Mike Bobinsky and Mayer Fistal to give their diverse perspectives on a vision for the bridge as a means of kicking off this discussion. The group then broke into 5 working groups to develop Vision statements. Each group shared their group's Vision statement as follows:

Group 1

- Safe for all users
- Memorable (to all users/not utilitarian)
- Attractive (I-295)
- Integrate multi-modal uses
- Seamless connection between communities
- Don't detract from the natural surroundings / blend in
- Soft edges / arches
- Gateway
- Connection to water's edge

Group 2

- Significant transportation asset linking communities.
- Bridge design should accommodate multi-modes, including appropriate (not sure of word) for recreational uses
- Design will create safe, memorable experiences
- Durable, functional, attractive and a balanced approach
- Design allows for an educational opportunity with overlooks and diagrams

A bridge that connects communities, inspires everyone with aesthetic pride, satisfaction that all potential users are ideally accommodated, knowledge that the highest standards of design and construction elements are included, reflects the appropriate balance between function and form, and having as far fetched a vision as possible looking forward to 2112.

Group 3

The Martin's Point Bridge will be safe, attractive and environmentally sensitive bridge while adequately serving the needs of the motoring public, bicyclists, pedestrians, recreational fishermen and boaters. Martin's Point Bridge will have attractive design features and separate, safe passage for bicyclists and pedestrians, while providing better access and parking to enjoy the river. This project will realistically maximize the available space for the various modes of transportation while preserving and enhancing the scenic and historic qualities of the area for travelers and residents.

Group 4

The design and construction of the bridge must:

1. Incorporate sustainable construction methods and materials.
2. Meet the needs of multiple users (auto, pedestrian, bicycle, fishing)
3. Aesthetically attractive
 - Low level lighting with plants
 - Maintain water view
 - Attention to design detail and materials (railing, entry/exit points)
4. Moderating traffic design speed by the design itself (roundabouts on Falmouth approach)
5. Design should include neighborhood context (environmental + historic)

Group 5

The Martin's Point Bridge will provide safe and efficient transportation for bicyclists, pedestrians and drivers between Falmouth and Portland with access for fishing from the bridge, and recreational opportunities and water access below. The bridge will provide an unobstructed view of Casco Bay and will be designed to make the most of its scenic surroundings

Sally asked for volunteers to develop the Problems and Needs statement and a composite Vision statement for the next meeting. Patrick Costin, Adrian Fox and Cheri Juniewicz volunteered.

Action Items:

- Group of three volunteers will develop final draft Problems and Needs statement and composite Vision statement for the next meeting.
- Sally will send these to Committee members for review prior to next meeting.
- Sally will send the description of the public involvement effort pre-RFP to committee members for review once MaineDOT has completed its review. This will be discussed at the October meeting.

Next meeting: Date – Tuesday, October 26, 2010

Time: 6:00-8:00 pm

Location: Martin's Point Health Care center, 331 Veranda Street, Marine Hospital Building

Responses to Homework:

Site Context Evaluation, Section D Identify the Opportunities (in preparation for developing Vision statement)

What do you like best about the bridge and its immediate surroundings as a whole?

- Safe pedestrian walkway
- Safe access for fishermen
- Highlights scenic beauty of mouth of Presumpscott, Mackworth Island and Casco Bay
- Provides a pleasing scenic view and relaxing (mostly) ride for cyclists.

- The views from either side of the bridge, beautiful homes and “cottages” along the Falmouth shore and the historic buildings of the Martin’s Point Healthcare facility on the Portland shore.
- The existing bridge allows a full view of the surroundings while safely passing over the bridge (wide travel lanes help).

List a few things that you would do to improve the bridge and surroundings that could be done right away and that wouldn’t cost a lot.

- Clean up area around old bridge abutment for canoe/kayak launching.
- Landscape area on Falmouth side.
- Have WELCOME and DESCRIPTION signage.
- Waste collection.
- Sweeping of paved shoulder for cycling safety.
- Soften the noise and jostle of driving over the joints.
- Additional aesthetic lighting along the pedestrian path (maybe on rail posts, not “highway” type stanchions).
- Improved signage for speed control.
- Crosswalks painted with perhaps a raised center “safe zone” so each lane can be safely crossed separately.

What 3 changes would you make to this bridge and its immediate surroundings in the long term that would have the biggest impact?

- Provide “scenic outlook”
- Improve sight distance
- Change speed limits
- Remove opportunities for collision between users: bicycles/cars; fisherfolk/walkers; walkers/cyclists
- Create official parking and “put-in” for kayaks and canoes on Portland side.
- Create a more visually pleasing facility for all users through innovative structure and art
- Placards or markers for historical or nature notes.
- More aesthetic structure with thoughtful signage and lighting.
- Improved sight lines entering Portland.
- Move the entire Portland landing zone to the west as much as possible to improve the traffic control in & out of MPH.

What local partnerships or local talent can you identify that could help implement some of your proposed improvements? Please be as specific as possible.

- Falmouth Historical Society
- Greater Portland Landmarks
- Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and Department of Conservation
- Art community
- At B & M we used Associated Design Partners and Langford & Low as consultant and contractor for an addition to the Plant in 2006/7. They did a very good job for us on that project.